

Message Text

PAGE 01 PHNOM 14482 281254Z

54

ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W

----- 109174

R 281155Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4339

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

USMISSION USUN NY

CINCPAC

COMUSSAG

S E C R E T PHNOM PENH 14482

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, CB

SUBJECT: FIRST ASSESSMENT OF THE INCOMING LONG BORET GOVERNMENT

REF: (A) PHNOM PENH 14389/261215Z DEC 73

(B) PHNOM PENH 14470/281030Z DEC 73

1. THE INCOMING LONG BORET GOVERNMENT APPEARS TO BE BETTER EQUIPPED TO COPE WITH CAMBODIA'S EXTRAORDINARY ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS THAN ANY OF ITS PREDECESSORS IN THE PAST TWO YEARS. BUT THE PROBLEMS THEMSELVES HAVE BECOME FAR MORE ACUTE.

2. THE CABINET (REFTEL A) HAS LITTLE NEW BLOOD: 13 OF ITS 16 MEMBERS ARE HOLDOVERS. BUT MOST OF THE DEAD WOOD IN EARLIER CABINETS HAS BEEN ELIMINATED, AND THE SIXTEEN APPEAR TO US TO BE (IN KHMER TERMS) RELATIVELY PRODUCTIVE AND HARDWORKING. THE AVERAGE AGE HAS COME DOWN BY PERHAPS A DECADE.

3. THE PROMISE OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT RESTS IN FIVE POINTS:
(A) IN CONTRAST TO THE LAST THREE PRIME MINISTERS,
SECRET

PAGE 02 PHNOM 14482 281254Z

BORET HAS THE CONFIDENCE OF BOTH LON NOL AND SIRIK MATAK; THIS HAS BEEN MANIFEST IN THE RAPID NEGOTIATIONS ON THE CABINET AND ON ITS AMBITIOUS PROGRAM; LON NOL APPEARS

READY TO DELEGATE SOME SUBSTANTIAL AUTHORITY BORET;
(B) FIRST REACTIONS FROM THE ARMY SUGGESTS THAT
THE ANTAGONISMS WHICH MARKED RELATIONS BETWEEN CIVILIANS
AND MILITARY UNDER THE LAST THREE CABINETS ARE LIKELY TO
BE MUTED IN THIS ONE; BORET HIMSELF CALLS FOR THE "CLOSEST
COOPERATION" WITH THE ARMY IN HIS PROGRAM (REFTEL B), AND
COMMITS THE GOVERNMENT TO ENFORCE NATIONAL CONSCRIPTION;
(C) THE NEW CABINET PUTS THE SEAL ON THE COOPERA-
TION OF SIRIK MATAK'S REPUBLICANS AND LON NOL'S SOCIO-
REPUBLICANS;
(D) FAR MORE CLEARLY THAN ITS PREDECESSORS, THE IN-
COMING GOVERNMENT APPEARS TO RECOGNIZE THE GRAVITY OF THE
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS THE COUNTRY FACES, AND TO
COMMIT ITSELF IN ITS PROGRAM (SOMETHING NO EARLIER GOVERN-
MENT HAS DONE) TO ATTEMPT TO RESOLVE THEM; AND,
(E) LONG BORET HAS A SKILL AS A POLITICIAN WHICH
NONE OF THIS IMMEDIATE PREDECESSORS HAS HAD.

4. THAT SAID, THERE ARE OBVIOUS WEAKNESSES IN THE GOVERN-
MENT'S MAKEUP. IT REPRESENTS ONLY A PART OF THE POLITICAL
SPECTRUM, RUNNING FROM CENTER TO RIGHT, WITH RATHER MORE
WEIGHT ON THE LATTER SIDE. ALTHOUGH IN TAM'S EDUCATION
MINISTER, KEO SANGKIM, A FORMER DEMOCRAT, WILL STAY ON,
IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE MUCH APPEAL
TO THE LEFT LEANING BUT INCOME AND PERQUISITE CO ECIOUS
SOCIAL CLASS CONSTITUTED BY CAMBODIA'S 20,000 TEACHERS.
UNREST AMONG THE TEACHERS, WIOC THE POSSIBLE SYMPATHETIC
REACTION OF STUDENTS, WILL CLEARLY BE THE GREATEST
NEAR-TERM CHALLENGE TO THE GOVERNMENT. BORET WILL BE
ABLE TO OFFER THE TEACHERS SOME INCREASE IN REMUNERATION
(AT THE PRICE OF A STIFF DEVALUATION OF THE RIEL, BUT
NO MATTER WHAT HE DOES THE GOVERNMENT'S OFFER WILL FALL
FAR SHORT OF THE TEACHERS' DEMANDS. IT WILL TAKE ALL
OF BORET'S SKILL TO NEGOTIATE AROUND THIS SHORTFALL WITH-
OUT ACCIDE .

5. IN A BROADER FRAMEWORK, THIS GOVERNMENT SHARES WITH
SECRET

PAGE 03 PHNOM 14482 281254Z

ALL ITS PREDECESSORS A FUNDAMENTAL COMMITMENT TO THE STATUS
QUO IN THE SOCIETY, AND IN PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS. WE
CAN EXPECT OF IT A MORE INTELLIGENT, PROBLEM SOLVING
APPROACH TO GOVERNING A COUNTRY AT WAR. WE CAN EXPECT
IT AT LEAST TO ADDRESS THE GREAT QUESTIONS OF
CIVIL AND MILITARY DISCIPLINE, TAX EVASION AND CORRUPTION,
WHICH HAVE SUCH A CORROSIVE EFFECT ON THE REPUBLIC'S
WAR EFFORT. WE CAN EXPECT IT TO MAKE BETTER USE OF THE
MEAGER ENERGIES AVAILABLE TO THE REPUBLIC. WE CANNOT
EXPECT IT TO GIVE A NEW IMPULSE TO THE COUNTRY, NOR TO
REENGAGE IN ANY NUMBER THE DISAFFECTED AND APATHETIC MAJORITY.

6. IN SHORT, THIS GOVERNMENT SHOULD VVVE AS GOOD A

PERFORMANCE AS CAN BE OBTAINED WITHIN THE PRESENT
POLITICAL STRUCTURE.
ENDERS

SECRET

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: Z
Capture Date: 10 MAY 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 DEC 1973
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: thigpegh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973PHNOM14482
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: P750029-1848
From: PHNOM PENH
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731256/abqcegrh.tel
Line Count: 114
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: (A) PHNOM PENH 14389/261215Z DEC 73 (B) PHNOM PENH 14470/281030Z DEC 73
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: thigpegh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 OCT 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10-Oct-2001 by elyme>; APPROVED <29-Nov-2001 by thigpegh>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FIRST ASSESSMENT OF THE INCOMING LONG BORET GOVERNMENT
TAGS: PINT, CG
To: STATE INFO BANGKOK
SAIGON
VIENTIANE
USMISSION USUN NY
CINCPAC
COMUSSAG
Type: TE

Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005